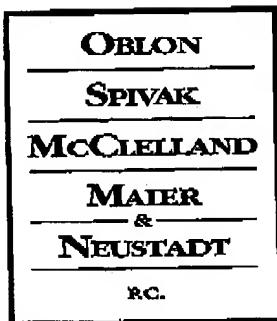


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depth, while at the same time detecting charged particles emitted from a peel starting point or a breakage starting point; specifying a peel occurring time and a fragility breaking time when charged particles are increased; measuring a peel strength and/or a fragility breaking strength.

In the above-described method, the test object may be a fragile film itself and fragile thin film covering the substrate. Further, the sample setting surface on the sample mounting base is changeable between a horizontal position and an inclined position, and the test object may be positioned horizontally while the indenter may be vertically pressed into the surface of the test object. Moreover, the test object may be arranged to form a tilt angle with the pressing direction of the indenter, so that the indenter may be pressed in a direction inclined with respect to the surface of the test object. In addition, when charged particles are collected by the charged particle collecting element, an electric potential having a polarity opposite to that of the charged particles (to be collected) is applied to the charged particle collecting element.

Furthermore, the present invention also provides a material strength measuring and evaluating apparatus for use in carrying out the aforementioned method. Such an apparatus comprises a sample mounting base for mounting a test object; an indenter to be pressed into the test object; a charged particle